

WARD NEWS

Ward 4 - Councilmember Stark

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Thank you for visiting the Saint Paul Ward 4 City Council website! We are glad you've come to find out what's happening in Ward 4 – a great place to live, work, and play.

Light Rail on University Avenue

On February 27th, the Met Council voted to move forward with an application to the Federal Transit Administration to build light rail on University Avenue. Thanks to some great advocacy work on the part of our neighborhoods, Russ and Councilmember Carter co-sponsored a resolution to include light rail stations at Hamline, Victoria, and Western Avenues. The Met Council voted to "rough-in" these stations, and we will work with Ramsey County and other partners to ensure that these stations are actually built either prior to the line opening or very soon thereafter.

As all of the different stakeholders in the light rail project continue to do their work, we're particularly interested in maximizing the benefits of light rail to our community. One big need is the development of a parking plan, for both during and after construction of light rail. Another critical area of interest is the ability of pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists to safely navigate and cross the Avenue, and we must create a "streetscape" – sidewalks, plantings, etc. – that improves the pedestrian environment and encourages people to walk and want to spend time and money on the Avenue.

Rock-Tenn

Like most people, our goal at the Ward 4 City Council office is to keep the Rock-Tenn recycled paper mill and its five-hundred good union jobs, while maintaining air quality and community health. The Rock-Tenn Community Advisory Panel consists of many thoughtful, committed citizens devoting a lot of time and energy to ensuring the best possible outcome for our community. Two exciting outcomes that have already emerged are significant reductions in the operation's energy use, and a potential process for recapturing excess heat for re-use. Follow the RCAP process by attending meetings or checking out www.rtadvisory.org

Republican National Convention

We are closely following planning for the Republican National Convention. First amendment rights are a high priority, and so is the City's need to plan thoughtfully. Applications for parade permits are now being accepted, though the parade route will not be determined until the traffic plan is completed around the end of May.

Vacant Housing & Foreclosure Issues

While vacant homes and foreclosure are not as significant in Ward 4 as they are in other parts of the City, we have been working with our colleagues and community members to develop an action plan. More than two percent of the City's housing stock is currently vacant, which ultimately affects stability of our neighborhoods and threatens to worsen our City budget challenges.

Bicyclist and Pedestrian Safety

Another important issue to Ward 4 is making our community more pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly. The competitive advantage of cities is their diversity and the fact that you don't have to get in a car every time you leave home. More broadly, the purpose of cities is to maximize opportunities for interaction and exchange. And what better way to interact with your community and surroundings than to walk or bike? In Ward 4, we are actively working on projects to improve conditions for biking and walking on University Avenue and around future light rail stations, on Marshall and Raymond Avenues, working to extend the Midtown Greenway into Saint Paul, and exploring the concept of a "quiet route" or "bike boulevard" along Sherburne or Charles, and looking forward to a new bike/ped connection over the Lexington Avenue bridge connecting points south with Como Park and points north.

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